IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace paragraphs 1 – 5 with the following:

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[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part under 37 C.F.R. § 1.53(b) of U.S. Pat. Application Ser. No. 09/602,129, filed June 23, 2000 now U.S. Pat. No. 6,829,654 _____, the entire disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference.

[0002] The following co-pending and commonly assigned U.S. Patent Applications have been filed on the same date as the present application. These applications relate to and further describe other aspects of the embodiments disclosed in the present application and are herein incorporated by reference:

[0003] U.S. Pat. Application Ser. No. 09/858,323 _____, "EDGE ADAPTER ARCHITECTURE APPARATUS AND METHOD", (Attorney Ref. No. 10736/7), filed herewith;

[0004] U.S. Pat. Application Ser. No. 09/858,324 _____, "APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR INTERFACING WITH A HIGH SPEED BI-DIRECTIONAL NETWORK", (Attorney Ref. No. 10736/8), filed herewith.

[0005] U.S. Pat. Application Ser. No. 09/858,308 _____, "APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR INTERCONNECTING A PROCESSOR TO CO-PROCESSORS USING SHARED MEMORY", (Attorney Ref. No. 10736/9), filed herewith.

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Please replace paragraph 159 with the following:

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[00159] First level rules/sets are executed against the buffered packets. In one embodiment, the slave micro-engines, described above, when idle, continually check the queue of packets ready for further processing. When there is a pointer in the queue of a packet that is ready, the idle slave micro-engine dequeues the pointer entry for the packet and begins processing that packet according to the rules and rule sets programmed into the adapter 800. In the preferred embodiment, each rule set ~~consist~~ consists of a hierarchical tree of nodes which are logically linked together, where one or more nodes form a rule. Each tree begins with a root

entry node where processing begins. Each node may be one of three types, data gathering, decision or action. Data gathering nodes retrieve data or other information about the current packet, about the current operating environment or about other packets which may be relevant to the current packet being processed and which have been stored for such reference. Data gathering nodes gather information to be used by decision nodes. Decision nodes perform a function utilizing the data gathered by the data gathering nodes such as a comparison function, an equality function, an inequality function, or some other mathematical and/or Boolean operation. An action node uses the result of the decision node to perform some operation on the packet. In the preferred adapter 800, the possible actions include releasing the current packet, copying the current packet and sending the copy to an external device via the external device interface 808, or alternatively, sending the PIB or pointer, deleting the packet or modifying some or all of the packet and releasing it, or combination thereof. Each node specifies another node to which processing should continue when processing of the current node is complete. It will be appreciated that the node and tree structure is a logical data organization which may be implemented as a table of pointers or other construct as is known.

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